

Rachel Hasenkamp
Professor Anne Hubbell
ENG 530
The Big Deal eBook
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The Big Deal eBook is a 21st Century Skills Resource that addresses the four C's of communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity. Evaluate **two** resources in the eBook that support a linguistic element. Describe the resources-provide specific details, identify which "C" they are listed under, and explain the linguistic application. How could you use these resources to promote language learning? Share ideas to help other teachers recognize the importance of these resources.

RESOURCE #1:

Title: ***Just Read Now!*** from p. 26 of The Big Deal eBook under "Thinking Critically and Solving Problems"

Website: <http://www.readingeducator.com/strategies/index.htm>

Just Read Now! is a resource for teachers to explore numerous reading and thinking strategies. Four main links under the "reading strategies" tab include discussion strategies, active reading strategies, organization strategies, and what caught my attention the most: vocabulary strategies. Freeman (2004) writes, "If students see a word more often, they are more likely to acquire the word (p. 200). One of the fourteen ideas provided for vocabulary on the website is called Rivet, a variation of Hangman. In the game, the teacher draws a line for each letter of a vocabulary word. The teacher then begins to slowly fill in each letter until a student guesses the word. When this happens, the student goes up to finish spelling the word on the board, then chooses the next word from a key concepts list for classmates to solve. It turns vocabulary-learning into a game!

Another vocabulary strategy I came across at *Just Read Now!* is the Frayer Model which I encountered in my ELL Curriculum and Assessment class. In this model, students fill out a graphic organizer centered around a vocabulary word. Working in pairs, they fill in the four squares surrounding the centered vocabulary word they have been assigned. This includes the definition, characteristics,

examples, and non-examples. When finished, student pairs present their words and models with the class. Having students present their vocabulary findings in pairs is a great way to involve students who may be far more hesitant to present on their own, especially English learners, in classroom-wide word learning.

Other helpful features of this website include strategies for reading in the sciences, online professional development links, and links for families reading together. This last point is especially important. According to Krashen (2003), "Good thinkers, however they are defined, read a great deal and have read a great deal" (p. 72). Students who read for enjoyment at home, especially with their families, promote their language success. Links on the site include reading tips for families, interactive websites to promote reading for children, and suggested book titles with activities for family reading.

Certainly, these resources promote language learning by having students think critically about what they are reading, organizing thoughts into graphic organizers and other concept maps, and building their linguistic abilities through vocabulary knowledge. I plan to use some of the reading and vocabulary strategies I have never tested out before with my Language Arts students to enhance their linguistic competence.

RESOURCE #2:

Title: ***ELLLO's Mixer*** from p. 14 of The Big Deal eBook under "Communicating and Sharing Ideas"

Website: <http://www.ello.org/english/Mixer.htm>

In searching for my second resource that supports a linguistic element, I wanted to find a site that would be student-friendly. *ELLO's Mixer* is rather different from what I have seen before. On this website, the person browsing may click on a variety of subjects to listen to English speakers' opinions on

the topics through audio files and read the online print-form. Freeman (2004) notes that "Readers use graphophonic cues, a combination of visual and sound information, as they sample texts" (p. 75) and other forms of writing to construct meaning. I like that most of the topics on the *ELLO's Mixer* website would appeal to teenagers such as "BFF?" and "Fast Food".

Focusing on secondary aged students, I believe that this website would work best with a class of English learners because it offers these students practice with listening to a variety of English speakers. On the other hand, I could see this as a potential source in a general Language Arts or foreign language class depending upon how the teacher wished to incorporate it. For instance, students may choose a topic to listen to as they begin forming points for a persuasive argument as part of a paper or debate to later communicate or share with classmates. These listening selections may also serve to teach about dialect as students hear speakers ranging from a Canadian to a German speaking English.

Another perk of this website is that it provides commonly used words and phrases that students should know, highlighted in blue. If a student is unsure of the meaning of one of these words or phrases, he or she may click on the "Vocabulary" tab to see definitions and example sentences. One disadvantage of this website, however, is that there are no reading passages or audio files for reading longer texts. Another resource containing both extensive readings and audio accompaniments is <http://www.pbs.org/circleofstories/>, which contains stories from the Native American oral tradition. Nevertheless, I still feel that I could make good use of *ELLO's Mixer* within my classroom as a linguistic learning tool to encourage students to take more of an interest in generating facts and opinions while appreciating the vast expanse of the English language in our global world.